

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL MILAN

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AMCONSUL PALERMO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: INTERPARTY PROGRAM NEGOTIATIONS NEAR CONCLUSION

REF: ROME 10412

SUMMARY. AT A LATE-HOUR INTERPARTY MEETING ON JUNE 28, AGREE-
MENT WAS REACHED ON A LIMITED ACCORD ON THE CONTENT OF THE
MINORITY GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM PREFACED BY A PREAMBLE WHICH
EMPHASIZES THE "DIFFERENT OUTLOOKS" OF THE PARTIES "ON THE
COUNTRY'S FUTURE POLITICAL PROSPECTS." THE INDIVIDUAL PARTY
DIRECTORATES ARE MEETING JUNE 30 AND JULY 1 TO RATIFY THE
AGREEMENT, WHICH IN ALL LIKELIHOOD WILL BE SIGNED (WITH THE
LIBERALS PROBABLY AS THE ODD-MAN OUT) ON MONDAY, JULY 4.
ATTENTION IS NOW BEING DIRECTED TO THE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE
PROBLEM OF DECIDING ON A FORMULA TO CONVEY THE AGREEMENT
TO PARLIAMENT WITHOUT MODIFYING THE EXISTING BASIS FOR
SUPPORT OF THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT. THE EMBASSY WILL
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COMMENT ON THE CONTENTS OF THE PROGRAM AGREEMENT,
PUBLISHED IN L'UNITA'S JUNE 30 EDITION, BY SEPTTEL. END
SUMMARY.

1. IT NOW APPEARS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT A LIMITED
AGREEMENT ON THE CONTENT OF THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT'S
PROGRAM WILL BE REACHED WHEN THE PARTY DELEGATIONS ASSEMBLE

AGAIN COLLEGIALLY ON MONDAY, JULY 4. THE INTERPARTY NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT CONCLUDED LATE ON JUNE 28 WITH THE PARTICIPANTS ESSENTIALLY AGREEING TO DISAGREE ON ISSUES THAT PROVED IRRECONCILABLE. COVERING THREE NEWSPAPER PAGES, THE FULL TEXT OF THE AGREEMENT IS PUBLISHED IN THE JUNE 30 EDITION OF L'UNITA, THE ONLY NEWSPAPER SO FAR TO PRINT MORE THAN BRIEF EXTRACTS. BY SEPTEL, THE EMBASSY WILL COMMENT ON THE CONTENTS OF THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT WHICH COVERS PUBLIC ORDER, THE ECONOMY, EDUCATION, AND NOMINATIONS TO STATE ENTERPRISES.

2. THE WAY WAS EVIDENTLY CLEARED TO CONCLUDE THE 14 WEEKS OF INTRICATE NEGOTIATIONS BY A DECISION ON JUNE 28 TO PREFACE THE AGREEMENT WITH A PREAMBLE THAT UNDERLINES THE DEEP POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTIES. IN EFFECT, THE PREFACE SERVES TO DENY THAT AN AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN THE PARTIES TO MEET THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISIS CONSTITUTES IN ANY WAY A POLITICAL PACT BETWEEN THE PARTIES. THUS, THE PREAMBLE SPECIFICALLY REFERS TO THE "DIFFERENT OUTLOOKS" OF THE PARTIES "ON THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE POLITICAL PROSPECTS," WHICH EACH PARTY WILL DOUBTLESS INTERPRET IN ITS OWN WAY.

3. OF ALL THE PARTIES, THE COMMUNISTS ALONE PROFESS TO BE CONTENT. ALTHOUGH THE ACCORD IS MUCH MORE LIMITED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN SCOPE THAN THE PCI HAD INITIALLY DEMANDED (NO MENTION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ETC.), PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER'S STATEMENT STRESSES THAT THE AGREEMENT "CONSTITUTES A NEW ELEMENT IN ITALIAN POLITICS." HE ASSERTS THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS ADVANCED THE PCI POSITION TOWARD A "MORE FAVORABLE AND ADVANCED GROUND." HE PLEDGES THAT THE PCI WILL CONTINUE ITS STRUGGLE, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE PSI, TOWARD FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT, A GOAL BLOCKED "ESPECIALLY BY THE RESISTANCE OF THE DC." THE PCI, HOWEVER, "WILL MAINTAIN THIS OBJECTIVE VERY VIVIDLY IN THE CONSCIENCE AND IN THE ACTIONS OF THE GREAT MASSES." BERLINGUER'S APPARENT DEFENSIVENESS ON THE VALUE OF A LIMITED ACCORD WAS ALSO UNDERLINED BY HIS ASSERTION THAT "THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGREEMENT CANNOT BE DISTORTED OR UNDERESTIMATED." IN AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO PSI AND PSDI GRUMBLINGS AS WELL AS TO THE ULTRA-LEFT (WHICH HAS HEAPED HARSH CRITICISM ON THE PCI FOR ALLEGEDLY REINFORCING THE DC'S POLITICAL STRENGTH), BERLINGUER STATES THAT WHOEVER MINIMIZES THE AGREEMENT'S SIGNIFICANCE "DOES NOT RENDER A SERVICE TO THE COUNTRY NOR FACILITATE THE NECESSARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION."

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4. THE DC'S REACTION WAS POSITIVE BUT RESTRAINED. ZACCAGNINI LABELED THE AGREEMENT A GOOD ONE, BECAUSE IT WOULD SERVE TO REDUCE POLITICAL TENSIONS AND "REINFORCE" THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH PRESSING PROBLEMS. THE SOCIALISTS CLEARLY ARE UNHAPPY OVER THE CONTENT AND THE LIMITED POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE THAT THEY PERCEIVE IN THE AGREEMENT. THE PSI, JOINED BY THE PSDI, IS CLEARLY DISPOSED, HOWEVER, TO GO ALONG WITH THE ACCORD. THE REPUBLICANS CONTINUE TO STRESS THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM BUT ARE ALSO NOT PRESENTING OBSTACLES TO SIGNING THE AGREEMENT. THE LIBERALS, HOWEVER, REMAIN THE MOST CRITICAL FOR ITS LACK OF SPECIFICITY. IT APPEARS VERY LIKELY THAT THEY WILL NOT AGREE TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT ON JULY 4 ON THE GROUNDS THAT FORMAL ADHERENCE SMACKS TOO MUCH OF A POLITICAL ACCORD WITH THE PCI.

5. BEFORE THE AGREEMENT CAN BE SIGNED, ALL OF THE
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PARTIES WILL CONVENE THEIR RESPECTIVE DIRECTORATES TO RATIFY ADHESION TO THE ACCORD. THE PSI BEGAN A TWO-DAY MEETING OF ITS CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON JUNE 30. THE PRI AND PSDI DIRECTORATES ALSO MET ON JUNE 30; THE DC, PCI AND PLI DIRECTORATES ARE SCHEDULED FOR JULY 1. ALTHOUGH MINOR REFINEMENTS OF THE PREFACE AND AGREEMENT MIGHT RESULT, THE PARTIES ARE EXPECTED TO FOCUS ON THE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE QUESTION AS TO HOW THE AGREEMENT WILL BE CONVEYED TO PARLIAMENT FOR ACTION.

6. AT THE JUNE 28 MEETING, MORO PROPOSED THAT THE AGREEMENT BE CONVEYED TO PARLIAMENT BY MEANS OF A JOINT MOTION BY THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP HEADS OF THE SUBSCRIBING PARTIES. THE AGREEMENT WOULD THEN BE DEBATED IN PARLIAMENT WITH A REQUEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT TRANSLATE ITS CONTENT INTO SPECIFIC DRAFT LEGISLATION. THIS PROCEDURE WOULD SATISFY THE DC'S INSISTANCE THAT THE AGREEMENT NOT CHANGE THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT FORMULA NOR REQUIRE A NEW PARLIAMENTARY VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THE DC EVIDENTLY HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNISTS AND REPUBLICANS FOR THIS PROCEDURE. THE SOCIALISTS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND LIBERALS, HOWEVER, WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE PROGRAM AGREEMENT BY OPENING THE DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT WITH AN ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI. THEY MAINTAIN THAT SINCE THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE INTERPARTY NEGOTIATIONS, IT MUST SUBSCRIBE TO THE AGREEMENT IN SOME WAY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE "GUARANTEES" THAT IT WILL CARRY IT OUT. ANDREOTTI (THROUGH A POLITICAL LIEUTENANT) PUBLICLY PROPOSED STILL A THIRD SOLUTION--THAT OF BIMONTHLY MEETINGS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP HEADS TO ASSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT. DC SPOKESMEN, JOINED BY THE PLI, HAVE SPOKEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OUTSHARPLY AGAINST ANDREOTTI'S PROPOSAL, AND IT APPEARS AN UNLIKELY ALTERNATIVE. WHILE THE IDEA COULD CONCEIVABLY BE REVIVED, THE POSSIBILITY OF A GOVERNMENT SHUFFLE AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING "POLITICAL GUARANTEES" NOW SEEMS REMOTE, AND IT APPEARS INCREASINGLY LIKELY THAT THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGREEMENT WILL BE LIMITED TO THE AGREEMENT ITSELF.

7. COMMENT: ASSUMING THAT THE AGREEMENT WILL BE CONCLUDED EARLY NEXT WEEK AS EXPECTED, ITS MAIN POLITICAL PURPOSE APART FROM THE SPECIFIC POINTS ON WHICH A CONSENSUS WAS REACHED, WILL BE TO AVOID A GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND GET THROUGH THE VACATION PERIOD. THIS IS EVIDENT FROM THE VERY GENERALIZED NATURE OF THE AGREEMENT (ALREADY

BEING DUBBED HERE AS A "MINI-ACCORD") WHICH MASKS THE DEEP CONCEPTUAL AND POLICY DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE POLITICAL PARTIES. THE LONG NEGOTIATIONS, IF ANY-THING, HAVE LEFT THE POLITICAL PARTIES MORE DIVIDED THAN EVER. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PCI AND PSI ARE PAINFUL; THE SOCIALISTS FEEL DONE-IN BY THE PCI'S CAUTION AND RELUCTANCE TO PUSH THE DC. THE OTHER LAY PARTIES HAVE ALSO BEEN LEFT SMARTING OVER THE PCI'S OBVIOUS PREFERENCE TO REACH PRIVILEGED UNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE DC. DESPITE SOME SIGNS OF UNEASE AND INTERNAL STRAINS, THE DC UNDER MORO'S LEADERSHIP, PROVED IT COULD RESIST MAJOR POLITICAL CONCESSIONS BY REMAINING STEADFAST AND UNITED--SO MUCH SO THAT BERLINGUER HAS HAD TO PREPARE HIS PARTY FOR SETBACKS BY POINTING OUT A RESURGENCE OF DC STRENGTH. IN SUM, NEGOTIATIONS HAVE PRODUCED A SUMMER TRUCE FOR A BATTLE THAT MAY WELL BE REOPENED IN THE FALL.GARDNER

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